

Exciter

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society



Worldwide Friendship

June 1999 Number 347

Matt Sickles W2BYV Appointed Wake County EC

Dolly Sickles, Editor, and Gary KN4AQ

APEX, North Carolina—Raleigh Amateur Radio Society (RARS) club member, Matthew Sickles W2BYV, has been appointed ARRL Emergency Coordinator (EC) for Wake County by Reed Whitten, Section Manager, ARRL North Carolina. At a time when amateur radio interest seems to be waning, Sickles is exemplary in his enthusiasm for the hobby.

An FCC licensee for only nine months, Sickles has provided constant support for Wake County and the surrounding area during his short tenure. Acting Public Relations Director since February, Sickles has garnered great support from his fellow RARS club members. His willingness to assist others in the community, his interest in the weather, his great organization skills, and his electronic expertise paint him as the perfect candidate for the Wake County EC.

Wake County ARES has been without an official EC for several years. Jerry Davis KE4TTS has done an excellent job as acting EC, maintaining a call-up list, planning and recruiting operators for drills and organizing staffing at the state and county EOCs for extended operation during Hurricane Fran and other activations. But Jerry is very happy in a support role and did not want the official EC title. Without a full-time EC, Wake County ARES missed several key functions—there were no meetings, no training sessions and little viability at club meetings. The stations at the EOCs saw little attention and had to be cleaned up as events got underway. Matt is enthusiastic about the opportunity to revitalize the missing pieces of Wake County ARES.

"I've always been interested in community relations work, and my ease at learning amateur radio skills have catapulted me to a position Where I can really make a difference in the community," says Sickles. "My only hope is that, if I weren't a ham [Operator], there would be

another volunteer willing to step up and watch over my family."

Congratulations, Matt W2BYV, and thanks for your effort to help coordinate one of the most crucial needs in any community.



On the Spot

- Prepare for Field Day on June 25, 26, 27! See page 3 for more details.
- Welcome back W4DW 146.64! Watch for more repeater news in August.

Exciter Publishing Information

Dolly Sickles, Interim Editor

Exciter is published monthly by the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society and is available to its members at no cost. *Letters to the Editor*, technical articles, amateur radio community items of interest, and guest editorials are always welcome.

Articles published in *Exciter* do not officially represent the views of endorsement by the society. Articles are printed at the discretion of the editor; no article will be published unless it is accompanied by the article submitter.

All *Exciter* submissions must be received by the editor by the third Tuesday of each month. Articles can be hand-written, typed, or submitted electronically, and may be sent directly to the editor or submitted via any society officer.

Amateur radio-related items for sale by members of the society may be advertised without charge for one issue, but may be re-submitted as often as desired. Only non-commercial classified advertising will be printed with no charge.

Commercial advertisers may contact the *Exciter* editor for advertising rates and sizes. All proceeds from commercial advertising are donations to the society. Please do not use amateur radio as a means of transmitting commercial advertising information or material.

Contributions, inquiries and comments concerning *Exciter* content, advertising, distribution, and policies should be directed to the *Exciter* editor.

Dolly R. Sickles
102 Acorn Hill Lane
Apex, North Carolina 27502-6546
919.303.6657
isabeaux@mindless.com

President's Corner

Gary KN4AQ

Dorothy was right, there's no place like home. When the RARS 146.64 repeater went off the air last year, most regular users scattered to the many other machines around Raleigh—the PCRN's 146.88 and 147.15, WARS' 147.195, the Graham Repeater Association's new 145.19, the W4ATC StARS' 146.775, JARS' 147.27, and several others. I'd like to thank the owners of those machines for absorbing the extra traffic and RARS nets. I used all of those repeaters but spent more time than ever on simplex, mostly 147.42 (our "official" simplex frequency).

I've heard it alleged, though, that many hams simply turned off their radios or left them parked on 146.64 awaiting the repeater's return. Regardless, the repeater has been on the air about a week as I write this column, and over that week I've heard many voices and call signs that have long been absent. So many people are glad to have the 64 back, and that includes me.

By now, you've probably heard the names and call signs of the people who got the machine going, but I want to repeat them here for the record, ensuring the recognition they deserve: Danny Hampton K4ITL and Bernard Blackmon KC4UPX, Bill Lyon KD4LLQ, Fred Decker KE4IXL, Danny Musten KD4RAA, Mike Murphy WA4BPI, Chuk Gleason KB4MDZ and Frank Scaraglino KA2FWC.

Danny K4ITL builds the best repeaters in the country. His PCRN system machines sound great all across the state. He built us a PCRN-quality repeater for far less than the price of an average, new commercial-quality machine. While the 64 wasn't built in record time, Danny emphasizes quality, experience and expertise. The constant upgrade and maintenance program Danny performs on his machines is unparalleled by anyone, so I'm grateful that he managed to squeeze us in *and* I'm glad he did it right.

Bernard KC4UPX did all his work behind the scenes. First the tower search, then negotiations leading to the final selection, and finally the paperwork (contracts, insurance and all of the DOT forms—they're paying for our relocation since our old home tower was in the way of the new North Wake Expressway).

Bill KD4LLQ and Fred KE4IXL have programmed the controller—no simple trick with an S-Comm. They've also assisted Danny KD4RAA in preparing and installing the repeater, and maintained the system at Danny's KD4RAA shop on 145.13. (*continued on page 7*)

Did you know that the secretary has a copy of all the RARS newsletters since 1969? They are archived in the "RARS Cabinet" along with lots of other historical club tidbits. The cabinet is available for inspection by any RARS member. Call the secretary for an appointment.

HAM Facts

RARS 146.64 Repeater Stats

FRED KEFIXL

For more information, refer to the RARS Web site at <http://www.rars.org>.

Antenna type: Commercial 4-stack collinear array

Antenna height: 250 foot AGL

Location: Near the NC State Fairgrounds

Directivity: Strongest to the SE, shadowed to the NW

Range to 50-watt mobile: 30–50 miles (except NW)

Power: 36 Watts out of the duplexer (will be raised)

Ground elevation: 490 feet

Height above average terrain: 398 ft.

Feedline: 330 feet of 7/8" Cablewave, 25 feet of 1/2" Andrew Superflex

Autopatch: Open to all. To use: identify yourself, dial number. To drop: press #.

S-Meter: No

Tone: No. Sends 88.5 (currently not enabled)

Time-out timer: 3 minutes (1 minute during rush hour)

Time and date: punch in code 239

Emergency Autodial: 910 (Cary), 911 (Raleigh), 914 (HP), 917 (NWS)

Autopatch redial: To use: press 1 (within 30 minutes of last Autopatch)

Autopatch timer extend: To use: press 2 when you hear the warble tones

RARS Web Site Gets Much Anticipated Facelift

Cliff KF4RDP

Changes to the RARS Web site began in earnest on May 10th with a homepage facelift. As we discussed in the May 1999 *Exciter* issue, the site has a new URL and can be found at <http://www.rars.org>.

Users can still enjoy an all-inclusive Web site, full of club and repeater information, a calendar of events, public service information, RARS club information, and links to other amateur radio spots of interest. The new layout is cleaner and better organized, and better optimizes the real estate of your computer monitor (that means less scrolling and hunting for content and link descriptions).

Cliff KF4RDP, the new RARS Webmaster, has worked at updating the site. Said Cliff KF4RDP, "The material stored on the Web site is great. It just needs some serious reorganization. The people that have contributed to it deserve credit for what they've done so far it's making my job that much easier."

The Web site update focuses on organization, individual page content, new features, more timely updates, and ease of use. Club member and user feedback has been put to the task and is the major driving force for the guidelines used to review and update of the existing material.

Three new features have been added to enhance the sleek new look and feel of the RARS site—*What's New*, a *Solar Activity Indicator*, and the *RARS Net Schedule*.

Look to the *What's New* page for news stories submitted by RARS members. Such stories will be late breaking information that relates to RARS and to the local ham community. This section will be enhanced by the overflow *Exciter* stories submitted each month.

A Solar X-ray Activity indicator has been added to the main page, as well. This indicator should be of special interest to the HF crowd since it provides a 24-hour solar activity history. Interested operators should check out the link for more detailed data. And watch out for the next Mega-Flare!

Net Schedules are now posted on the site with descriptions and a concise schedule of the various directed nets, complete with Net Control Operators listed. This link also lists any openings that may exist in the schedule.

Other points of interest include a RARS Members Only section and PDF versions of *Exciter*. "It's much more inviting and gets to the point," notes Tim KF4RTX, RARS Vice President. Keep in mind that any Web site constantly evolves; members are invited to forward any ideas, comments, suggestions, or additions to the webmaster at webmaster@rars.org, or check the Web site for contact information.

Field Day will be held on Saturday and Sunday, June 26 and 27. We will be meeting at the same place as last year—at Bill Pond's home. For more information, contact Bill Pond NoWP at 919.870.7663 or check the RARS Web site at <http://www.rars.org>. Let's keep this winning streak alive! Don't forget that July's issue of *Exciter* will be a special edition on Field Day, so get those stories and photos in to the Editor by July 5!

The regular meeting of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society was held on May 4 at the Forest Hills Baptist Church on Clark Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by President Gary Pearce KN4AQ, who welcomed 68 members and 7 guests. David N4YTO gave the treasurers report RARS membership is 260. A club renewal form will be included in the June Exciter.

As the Exciter Editor, Matt W2BYV noted that the newsletter is at the printer and should be mailed on Thursday. As the Public Service Coordinator, he listed the events supported by local hams during the last month and thanked the volunteers. Gary KN4AQ announced the RARS dinner, a monthly event, which takes place on the 4th Tuesday of the month and meets for dinner at the Golden Coral on Glenwood Avenue at 6:30 PM. The RARS dinner replaces the Crystals meeting, and all members and their families are invited to attend. Please note, there is a possibility of

meeting at different locations.

Thomas KF4JKQ gave an ARES and Skywarn brief and announced net control training will occur on Friday, May 7 at the State Emergency Operations Center.

Bernard KC4UPX gave the FM committee report. He said that .64 is expected to be on the air in the next 1 to 2 weeks. Also, steady progress continues at the Bayleaf site, which is home to the 444.525 and 224.64 machines.

Gary KN4AQ reported on the RARS 10 meter net, which meets on Wednesday evenings at 8:30 PM on 28.420MHz; net control stations are needed.

Cliff KF4RDP, RARS Net Manager, reported on the 2 meter net activity, saying that the net meets only two nights each week at present, but that he would like to line up net control stations for when the new .64

machine is operational.

Cyndi KD4ACW gave the hamfest report and began by thanking all the workers. Table sales were up, but ticket sales were down from last year. All in all, it was a successful event once again. Mark WD4KSE announced that the Triangle ATV Association has arranged for a tour of the channel 22 transmitter facility on May 27 at 7:00 PM. This is their regular meeting night for May. Contact Mark for details. Alan AB4OZ announced that the Durham hamfest is scheduled for Saturday, May 29.

At 8:36 PM, Gary KN4AQ introduced the program for the evening: Local hams on WPTF with Tom Kearney. There was video footage shot in the WPTF studio just before the hamfest.

The drawing was held for the hamfest worker incentive prize. The winner was Alicia KF4ZIX. The door prize went to NF2N. The meeting adjourned at 9:29 PM.

Bandwidth to Spare—Move into the Fast Lane with ADSL (one ham's story)

Gary KN4AQ

Those of you working at big, computer-savvy companies know what high-speed Internet access is like. Most of us using the Internet at home have long suffered with slow dial-up connections. My wife, Cyndi KD4ACW, a computer-savvy SAS employee, turned up her nose at web-surfing from our home computer, apprehensive of the slow connections and poor line quality. Well, I finally bit the bullet (and emptied my wallet) and opted for an at-home, high speed connection called ADSL (Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line). It is expensive. It is wonderful. It is worth it.

High-speed home access is a Holy Grail among Internet providers. Through my own research, I have found that there are three solutions currently being rolled out—satellite delivery, cable modem, and ADSL. ADSL service is high-speed Internet access over standard phone lines. I can't tell you what technical magic is behind ADSL, but I can relate my experience with it.

Once you place your order directly through BellSouth, the technicians come to install the lines (you need a working computer for this stage and more importantly, you need to be in one of the select areas that provides ADSL service). An ADSL circuit connects ADSL digital modems on each end of the phone line to create a high-speed downstream channel, a medium speed upstream channel and a voice channel. *(For Gary's full ADSL story, please refer to the RARS Web site at <http://www.rars.org>.)*

For more information, including billing and ordering information, refer to the ADSL page on the BellSouth Web site at <http://www.bellsouth.com/bbs/adsl/main.html>.

The monthly board meeting of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society was held at the Forest Hills Baptist Church on April 20. The meeting was called to order by KN4AQ at 7:36 PM. Members present at that time were KD4ACW, KN4AQ, KE4FCJ, K4HF, AB4OZ, KO4QH, WD4RDT, KF4RTX, KC4UPX, N4YTO, W2BYV, and AC4ZO. The total attendance was 13.

The minutes of the March meeting were reviewed. On motion by KE4FCJ, seconded by KF4RTX, the minutes were approved. N4YTO gave the Treasurer's report and said that the membership is currently 258.

Committee Reports:

- KC4UPX gave the FM committee report
- Paperwork is progressing for the Bayleaf site
- There is good news on the .64 site—the antennas are mounted; all tower work is complete, including the feedline installation; the repeater is expected to be on the air by the end of this week

Exciter discussions will be discussed under the guise "New Business."

W2BYV gave the Public Service report. Hams assistance during five events this past weekend went well and all events were adequately staffed and successful; there are several events scheduled for the coming weekend as well.

KD4ACW reported on the hamfest. The final financial figures are not yet available; however, while table sales were higher than last year, ticket sales were lower. Feedback from the vendors varied

widely.

AC4ZO gave the Education Department report conveying that the Spring class has graduated with a good success rate.

New Business:

The issue of publishing the General and Board meeting minutes in the Exciter was heard. This item came about because of the absence of minutes in the past few newsletters. The Secretary asked that we adopt the policy of requiring the minutes to be published. After a small amount of discussion, a motion was made by KE4FCJ, seconded by KD4ACW, that we adopt the policy of requiring the meeting minutes to be published in the monthly newsletter. The motion passed.

An Audit Committee was appointed by the President to conduct an audit of the Club's financial records. The committee will be chaired by AC4ZO. N4YTO reported to the board that the IRS has assessed a penalty on the club for late filing of certain tax forms. A check was remitted to the IRS, along with a letter of appeal. A motion was made by K4HF and seconded by KC4UPX that the board authorize the Treasurer to transfer funds between line items as permitted in the bylaws to cover the penalty. The motion passed, and the president agreed to explain the situation to the membership with a notice in the newsletter.

Matt Sickles W2BYV has been identified as a candidate for Public Service Director. Matt W2BYV has been performing the function and has agreed to continue in an official capacity. On motion by KE4FCJ,

seconded by KD4ACW, Matt was appointed to the position as a non-board member. A special election may be held later in the year if appropriate.

The board accepted the resignation of *Exciter* Editor, Israel Pattison N4ZVU. Israel explained that the work load from a full-time job, in addition to classes at NCSU, have prevented him from producing *Exciter* in a timely manner during for several months.

N4YTO presented documentation on our financial activity for the past few years, along with ideas for the 19992000 year. The annual budget discussion began and many ideas were brought up. After in depth discussion, the Treasurer noted there was enough information to draw up a proposed budget for presentation at the May board meeting. This ended the discussion.

Announcements and Comments

- KD4ACW thanked everyone for their assistance with the hamfest
- KN4AQ displayed the cover of the May issue of CQ magazine featuring our own Chuck K4HF; Chuck K4HF was asked for a full explanation of how he came into his newfound fame

On motion by KD4ACW, seconded by KE4FCJ, the meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM.

State EOC Antennae Rebuilt

Gary KN4AQ

Sun and weather have taken their toll on antennas atop the State Office Building, home to the state EOC. The commercial verticals are okay, but all the wire antennas (used by ARES and CAP) ended up on the roof.

On Sunday, May 16, a small band of hams rebuilt the 40/80-meter ARES dipole to get the EOC station back on

the air. The work party consisted of Max Bloodworth KO4TV, Cliff Broughton KF4RDP, Tim Ruffin KD4SLD, Jeff Wittich AC4ZO, Eric Haywood KG4CXR, and Gary Pearce KN4AQ.

Tom Loree NS2I also assisted. Tom is an employee working in the EOC communications room. It's good to have a ham working there. He's raised our

visibility with Emergency Management—they're now encouraging more of the department employees to get ham licenses. A new tri-band Kenwood has been installed in the communications booth and they have requested a ham operator be present during some SKYWARN activations to bring the EOC closer into the communications loop.

Two corrections from issue 346

Page 3: Jesse Bunnell was not a ham; there was no ham radio yet at that point in history.

Page 6: When sending an Elmer to a fellow ham, it is not necessary to provide explanation; simply inform headquarters of the recipient's name.

Tech Tips

Gary KN4AQ

Last winter has been one of the nicest SUMMERS I've spent in North Carolina with temperatures in the 60s and 70s so many days. So, this hardly feels like spring. But for VHF propagation, it is. That means a return to the "morning band opening" phenomenon on VHF and UHF, as well as the occasional all-day spectacular.

VHF band openings are a two-edged sword. It's a lot of fun to listen and talk through repeaters two or three hundred miles away on a band that normally limits you to 50 miles or so, but repeaters are coordinated for "normal" band conditions and during band openings, they appear to be too close together. Mobiles operating through a repeater in one city will also key up and perhaps interfere with users of a repeater on the same frequency in a city 200 miles away.

Patience, courtesy and a good understanding of what's happening can help tip the balance to the "fun" side. Run low power to talk through your local machine. Use a low, indoor antenna from your base station, or use a beam to control your signal. And most importantly, be tolerant of other signals "interfering" with your local repeater. Keep in mind that it isn't malicious.

RARS Officers

President

Gary Pearce KN4AQ
116 Waterfall Court
Cary, NC 27511
919.380.7286
kn4aq@ipass.net

Vice President

Tim Nicholson KF4RTX
3508 Mill Tree Rd, Apt B3
Raleigh, NC 27612
919.781.2896
kf4rtx@arrl.net

Secretary

Jeff Wittich AC4ZO
211 Dundalk Way
Cary, NC 27511
919.362.9456
jwittich@pagesz.net

Treasurer

David Fix N4YTO
324 Silverberry Court
Cary, NC 27513
919.677.8320
dfix@pagesz.net

President's Corner (continued from page 2)

Gary KN4AQ

Danny KD4RAA got us started. He made the arrangements with Danny K4ITL for the new repeater and began the negotiations that lead to the site we finally found. He has provided space for the temporary 64 machine and the current 145.13 machine, and helped work on those repeaters while assisting the W4ATC club in getting their new repeater working on 146.775

There still are more people working on RARS repeaters, like Mike Murphy WA4BPJ, who did much of the tower work for the antenna at Danny's shop. Chuk Gleason KB4MDZ and Frank Scaraglino KA2FWC are getting other equipment in shape and will be working with the 440 and 220 repeaters as they soon come back on-line. And I've done the background work in frequency coordination. It seems easy to sit back and chat on a repeater, but behind it there's a lot of effort. Enjoy it.

Amateur Radio Electronics

Home of 'Uncle Joe's Ham Shack'

Need antenna supplies right away (coax, wire, connectors and more)? Call Uncle Joe anytime! Need a Comtelco Mobile or Mag mount antenna? Call Uncle Joe anytime!

Please visit **Uncle Joe's Ham Shack** at
www.ipass.net/~wb5zpq/are1.htm

Joe Saah WB5ZPQ
wb5zpq@juno.com
Garner, NC
779-5659

Robert P. Holmes

ATTORNEY AT LAW

*Motor Vehicle negligence and
Workplace Injuries*

**2211 Wheeler Road
Raleigh, NC 27607
Voice 919.787.6360
FAX 919.787.6327
KE4FUD**

Tarheel Scanner/ SWL SIG Report

Kelly AE4FG

The May meeting of the Scanner/SWL SIG was held on the May 17 at the El Rodeo restaurant on Pleasant Valley Road in Raleigh. Ten people attended the meeting that ended around 9:15 PM.

The group discussed current monitoring events around the Triangle, such as Vice President Al Gore's visit.

Bob Zeher KE4JYV demonstrated a low power one tube AM transmitter that he built. Bob uses this transmitter to send a signal to his antique radios in his home. Bob also described how he uses ebay.com, the Internet-based auction site, to buy and sell radios.

Next meeting. The next meeting will be held on June 21 (third Monday) at the El Rodeo restaurant on Pleasant Valley Road in Raleigh. We meet for dinner at 6:30 and the meeting begins at 7:30. Scanner topics will be discussed at this meeting.

Everyone planning to attend is encouraged to bring any radio-related current event articles, frequency lists, talk group information, and most importantly any new or interesting radios they would like to share with the group.

For more information, e-mail Bob Zeher atke4jvy@juno.com or Kelly Mills ae4fg@hotmail.com, or call Bob KE4JYV at 481-9107.

IKON

Office Solutions

**Digital
Print on
Demand**

High quality, high impact graphics and documents in the quantities you need, when you need them, where you need them. IKON Business Document Services—the only truly corporate oriented print center in operation 24 hours, 7 days a week. Call or visit us today at 919.460.7000 or <http://www.ikon.com>.

Place
stamp
here

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc.
PO Box 17124
Raleigh, North Carolina 27619



June Exciter Number 347

June Calendar of Events

Tuesday, June 1—RARS club meeting

Saturday, June 12—Forsyth ARC hamfest, Winston-Salem

Tuesday, June 15—RARS board meeting

Monday, June 21—Scanner/SWL SIG meeting

Tuesday, June 22—RARS dinner

Friday, June 25—Field Day setup

Saturday, June 26—ARRL Field Day

Sunday, June 27—ARRL Field Day

Upcoming Special Issues . . .

July 1999—Field Day! Field Day! Field Day! Calling all hams—would you like to recount your 1999 Field Day experience? Send it to the Editor before July 5. Submissions should be 100-200 words in length, submitted electronically as rich text. Photographs are also welcome. Good luck in the competition.

August 1999—RARS repeaters (say it again?) RARS repeaters

Thank You RARSfest 1999 Volunteers

Cyndi KD4ACW

Many thanks to those who put so much time and effort into making RARSfest 1999 happen! Without your help it would not have gone so smoothly. Special thanks to the chairmen and other volunteers who worked behind the scenes during the months leading up to the hamfest. Their dedication and commitment is what made it a success!

More flea market tables were sold than ever before—we even ran out of tables on Saturday and managed to squeeze in a few more on Sunday morning for last-minute requesters. Dealer booth sales were up from last year, as well.

However, attendance was down following a nationwide dip in hamfest attendance. Let's try and figure out more ways to encourage interest and increase attendance. If you have any ideas or suggestions for next year's RARSfest 2000, please let me know. We are always looking for ways to do things better. Thank you again!